

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRAZZAVILLE 1071

E.O. 11652: GDS
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SUBJECT: CELEGRATION OF JULY 31

REF: BRAZZAVILLE 1025

1. JULY 31 MARKED TEN YEARS SINCE "MASSES" FREED PAST
PRESIDENT NGOUABI FROM SHORT-LIVED CAPTIVITY ORDERED BY
MASSAMBA-DEBAT, LEADING TO LATTER'S EVENTUAL REPLACEMENT
BY NGOUABI AS CONGOLESE PRESIDENT. OCCASION FEATURED
YHOMBY-OPANGO RADIO SPEECH JULY 30 (COPY OF FULL
TEXT POUCHED DEPARTMENT (AF/C-KATES), WITH PARACHUTE
DROP AND FOOTBALL MATCHES FOLLOWING DAY.

2. AS BACKDROP FOR WEEKEND, GOCB INFORMALLY ANNOUNCED THAT BANKS
WOULD BE OPEN JULY 29 AND 30 (SATURDAY AND SUNDAY) TO
PAY WORKERS' SALARIES THROUGH MID-AUGUST--AN ADVANCE
UNPRECEDENTED IN RECENT YEARS. ALTHOUGH IT TURNED OUT
THAT BANKS WERE CLOSED THOSE DAYS (AND JULY 31), THEY WERE OPEN AS
USUAL AUGUST 1, AND WERE MOBBED BY WORKERS WHO IN FACT
ARE, IN SOME CASES, RECEIVING SALARY ADVANCES. FRENCH
BANKING SOURCE TELLS US THAT BENEFACOR THIS TIME IS
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ANGOLA, ASSISTING CONGO WITH GULF RECEIPTS. INTENTION
OF ADVANCE PAYMENT OBVIOUSLY IS TO QUELL BROAD DISSATIS-
FACTION WITH CONGOLESE ECONOMIC SITUATION.

3. YHOMBY'S SPEECH DID LITTLE TO INSPIRE. LACKLUSTER
IN TONE, PRESIDENT SPOKE FOR 45 MINUTES AGAINST FORCES OF
REACTION, TRIBALISM, AND REGIONALISM. HE WAS FRANK IN

DESCRIBING THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY, AND FORCEFUL IN CALLING FOR GREATER UNITY, PRODUCTION, BETTER MANAGEMENT AND, TYPICALLY, SACRIFICES. THE REVOLUTION, HE DECLARED, MUST CONTINUE AGAINST FORCES OF IMPERIALIST EXPLOITATION: THE CONGO IS RICH IN WATER, FORESTS, AND PASTURES. THE COUNTRY MUST CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES AND ITS PEOPLE MUST RECOGNIZE THE NEED, IN ADDITION TO HELP FROM FRIENDLY COUNTRIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, FOR GREATER SELF-RELIANCE. YHOMBY PAID FEW TRIBUTES TO THE SYSTEM THAT PUT HIS ECONOMY IN SUCH A FIX, BEYOND AS USUAL, DESCRIBING THE CONGOLESE LABOR PARTY AS "MARXIST-LENINIST".

4. NOR WERE THERE MANY MORE REFERENCES TO MARX, ENGELS, OR LENIN THE FOLLOWING DAY. AND THE PROPAGANDA DISTRIBUTED THAT DAY MADE FAR FEWER REFERENCES TO YHOMBY HIMSELF THAT WE HAVE SEEN AT OTHER RECENT CEREMONIES. JULY 31 WAS, IN A SENSE, ARMY DAY HERE, ANOTHER CLEAR INDICATION THAT, AS WE HAVE REPORTED PREVIOUSLY, IT IS THE CONGOLESE ARMY, FOR ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, WHICH REALLY IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONGOLESE LABOR PARTY.

5. THE SOVIETS ORGANIZED THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MORNING PARACHUTE DROP JULY 31, AND THEIR HEAD INSTRUCTOR WAS THE STAR OF THE SHOW. SOMEWHAT MORE IGNOMINIOUS WERE SEVERAL CONGOLESE PARATROOPS WHOSE DESCENT UNFORTUNATELY

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LANDED THEM IN THE HOSPITAL, VIA CRUSHED AUTOMOBILE ROOFS AND ELSEWHERE. THERE WERE TWO FOOTBALL MATCHES THERE-AFTER, WHICH HAD A CIVILIAN TEAM BEAT THE ARMY, AND A NORTHERN TEAM BEAT THE SOUTHERNERS. SO EVERYONE CAME AWAY HAPPY, INCLUDING THE CIVILIAN LEADERS OF THE PARTY AND THE CABINET, WHO WERE VERY PUBLICLY REWARDED WITH MARIEN NGOUABI WRISTWATCHES AT THE TIME OF THE PARADROP. THERE NOW IS A BIT OF CULTISM, WE UNDERSTAND, AMONG BEARERS OF MARIEN NGOUABI WATCHES, WHO FROWN ON THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE THEM. THE CONGOLESE ARE SAID TO BE COPYING THE GABONESE, WHO HAVE A PRESIDENT BONGO WATCH. THE PRESIDENT BONGO WATCH HAS BONGO APPEAR AND DISAPPEAR AS THE HOURS GO BY. BEARERS OF NGAUABI WATCHES ARE NOT AS FORTUNATE. KATZEN

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